



THE BELL WELL IN REEVES COUNTY.

The new wildcat well brought in by the Dixie Land Syndicate company in Reeves county, 22 miles north of Pecos and 400 miles west of Fort Worth. Depth of well 657 feet. Production estimated from 25 to 1,000 barrels.

One of the most romantic chapters in American petroleum history is now being written in Texas by the wildcatter—that modern knight whose undaunted spirit seeks out the wild places to drill for oil. Jason's search for the golden fleece, the Spanish cavaliers' pursuit of Peruvian gold, the rush to California of the forty-niners, fades to insignificance compared to the wildcatter's conquest of the earth for liquid gold.

From Red River on the north to the Rio Grande on the south, the wildcatter is at work cleaving his way down into the dark recesses of old Mother Earth that he might make her disgorge her hidden secrets of petroleum wealth.

While the wildcatter is as brave as any knight of old, he does not sally forth on a gaily caparisoned steed, with shining lance and armor, but simply loads his steel drilling bit and steel casing on a big truck and hauls them out to his location. The cable adjusted, he spuds in and starts drilling with his steel bit; drilling until he breaks through the limestone rock or the granite rock that obstructs his downward course. If by some accident the hole is marred, he grimly skids the derrick and starts a new one. His month's of hard work may yield a "duster," if fate decrees so, he swallows his disappointment and moves on to some other field to try his luck again. Sometimes the elements conspire against him—the fields become quagmires of mud, the water in the bailer freezes, the storms blow down his derrick, but he soon repairs the damage, and goes doggedly back at the work of drilling with his steel bit—drilling through the adamantine rocks that ages have put in his way. A fighter as well as a dreamer, is this wildcatter. Insuperable difficulties seem not to dismay him. He has the optimism of a Don Quixote and the courage of a Richard Cœur de Lion.

Invariably he is a good loser—the square wildcatter—and if he worries at all about losses in his business because of the money he has lost for a hole in the ground, he is a different man. He is a different man who backed him—office, or some wildcatters who are crooked, within a few days who promote oil companies solely for had catrpoose of robbing the stockholders, but corn pa are honest wildcatters and it is the honest accordiatters I wish to exalt in this story.

One of the Poorest Wildcatters

There was a wildcatter who discovered the first oil of any consequence in Texas—the spot field at Beaumont—and it was wildcatters who discovered the Burkburnett field, the Anger field, the Desdemona and the Pecos. When Fowler saw at sunrise one morning oil flowing from his well between the rows at Burkburnett, he then realized that it was the best of his life's work. He knew that one of the poorest wildcatters in Texas was in a fair way to become a rich man. He could see smiles on the face of his groceryman who had so long complained his overdue account. The 90,000 barrels of oil which are taken daily from the oil coming along. The buggy car around Burkburnett are mainly because of the oil. The wildcatter's existence and optimism of this once in a while.

Why, hello, I was over there. When'd yo' take a look at me? Just lately, I've been a little better. I met Mr. H. and I met Mr. H. take on with him. Who'd he let go? Jim Felley. Did yo' heah what fo'? Why, yes, Colonel Rowley. I expect it's all right, to say so to you, sir. He was mean to his horses. That's right, I know that man. Anybody abuses his horses can't live in any of our wagons, no, suh. Have yo' seen any strangers round here? No, colonel, I saw a stranger. Well, they's a stranger faded out of Alkali Butte, with jes' thirty thousand dollars in good papah money. Tule. He come in afoot, an' he went around the butte onto Case O' Whiskey's pinto mare, an' Case O' sure did took on some when he come out the do' of the Oasis an' found hit gone, yas, huh! The money was out the Alkali Butte National Bank. Mr. Cole, the cashie, was theh alone, an' the little fel-jeh come in, an' jes, natrally stuck him up, an' looked him into the treasury vault, suh, an' went away with that theh money, jes' so!

The colonel gave his right hand a graceful undulating motion away from him, toward the prairie hills. In twenty minutes Mr. Cole was let out by M. Dodley, the president of the bank, an' Case Whiskey let on about his pinto bein' stole, t' ungodly whoops, suh, an' they went after him—jes' imagine tryin' to escape Case O' Whiskey's pinto! The idea was ridiculous. Every one knew the into. The colonel chuckled, but then added seriously: "But he didn't go so far, no, suh; not on the into. The holdup left that pinto on the creek, his side of town, an' they hunted high' they hunted low, suh, an' they wa'an't a hoss track nowhere about where that man'd gone off that creek flat, no, suh. Yo' see, they follower the into's track out the dusty trail, plain as a

The northwest extension of the Burkburnett field was brought in by a wildcat company. The first gusher in the northwest extension was the Burk-Waggoner well and the company was promoted by Will Sargent, a real estate broker of Fort Worth.

When Gordon, general manager of the Texas and Pacific Coal and Oil Company, had drilled his fourth dry hole at Ranger he was almost in despair, but with the characteristic courage of the wildcatter he drilled his fifth well—the McClesky well—and it came in gushing oil over the derrick. So the great Ranger oil field and its twin brother, the Breckenridge field, is the result of the faith and perseverance of a wildcatter.

The Hog Creek Oil Company at Desdemona, a local company, met with many discouragements, and finally failed, but its stockholders got together one day and decided to do something. The company was reorganized and a contract let to drill the Duke well. The Duke well, on the original 5,000-acre tract of the Hog Creek Oil Company, came in flowing over 1,000 barrels per day with a string of tools in the hole. How happy must have been the stockholders of the little independent Hog Creek Oil Company when they wildcatted into existence one of the richest oil fields in Texas.

The pioneers of our petroleum industry are the wildcatters; they blaze the way and endure many hardships in order to discover and develop new oil fields. Without the wildcatter it is doubtful if Texas would be ranked now as the greatest oil producing state in the United States. The big companies seem indifferent to bringing in new oil fields. As a rule, they prefer to let the little independent company do the prospecting. It must be more profitable to await the bringing in of a good wildcat well by an independent company than for a big company to bring in one. After a pool of oil is discovered by a wildcatter the big companies get busy and try to buy acreage up as close as possible to the wildcat well. As soon as the big company acquires all the acreage it wants around a well brought in by a wildcatter it usually proceeds to plan and carry out a large drilling campaign. If the big companies, as was the case in the northwestern Burkburnett extension, do not always get the acreage they want around a wildcat, they remain aloof and leave the little wildcatter alone with his well and no pipe line connections. They then have the wildcatter, in most instances, at their mercy, and he is either compelled to sell out to them at their price or keep his well and acreage at a great disadvantage. The wise wildcatter will usually sell to the bigger company rather than run the risk of being "frozen out."

The Wildest Wildcat Territory.

Roughly estimated, there must be at least 1,000 wildcat wells drilling in Texas at this time. Such a tremendous drilling campaign will undoubtedly result in the discovery of many new oil fields this spring and summer. Reeves County is now in the spotlight with a new wildcat well—the Ira Bell well—about 22 miles north of the town of Pecos, on the banks of the Pecos River. This well, at a depth of 657 feet, is awaiting the installation of a pump to determine its real value. The potentiality of the well is estimated all the way from 50 to 1,000 barrels. The well is 400 miles west of Fort Worth and in the wildest wildcat territory possible. Oil experts have taken the well seriously and are paying high prices for leases, not only near the well, but at considerable distance from the well. Boom times have come to the little frontier town of Pecos and the intensity of the boom is a reminder of the early days of Ranger, Burkburnett and Desdemona, when oil was first struck near these small towns.

The Bell well was drilled by the Dixieland Syndicate Company of which Mr. Ira Bell is General Manager. The syndicate owns one section of land on which the well was drilled and Bell and his associates own 50,000 acres in the vicinity of the well. Mr. Bell is a wildcatter

and has lived 15 years in West Texas. He was formerly connected with the J. J. Hagerman irrigation projects in the Pecos Valley. Before coming to Texas, Mr. Bell was an engineer and newspaper editor in Illinois.

Fisher & Gilliland, another large independent company, have just completed a good producing oil well in the Poteet No. 1, three miles west of Sipe Springs, Comanche County. This wildcat firm has been somewhat responsible for the discovery and development of the Sipe Springs territory. The Poteet No. 1 was a five month's drilling job and was drilled under many difficulties.

The Vestal well, in southwest Callahan County, was drilled by the Consolidated Oil Company, an independent company with headquarters at Cisco. The company was promoted by R. S. Rumph of Cisco. The company owns leases on 2,500 acres of land around the well. Oil was struck in the Vestal well at 3,757 feet and flowed over the top of the derrick before the drillers could bring the well under control. It is now probably producing between 300 and 500 barrels by heads. The company cannot determine its flow accurately as it has not yet been put on the gauge. This well proves up a large radius of wildcat territory and is the first well to flow from the Permian formation in that part of West Texas.

Young County, where the big companies are doing some wildcatting, broke its long silence last week with the announcement that the Cosden Oil & Gas Company had discovered oil on the Mary Timmons' farm, in the southwestern part of the county. The Timmons' well is promising and some of the experts think it is really the first big well for Young County. Production in the Timmons is coming from the Caddo or gray lime. It was shot at 3,600 feet, flowed by heads, and the well is reported making between 700 and 800 barrels per day.

Vernon is celebrating the coming in of the well of the Prescott-Peoria Company on the Wharton ranch, in Wilbarger County, twelve miles south of that city, which blew itself in March 26th. Arrangements are now being made to test its production and according to a statement of Mr. Lloyd Sigler, General Manager of the Tee-Pee Company, who brought in the well, the well made two flows over the derrick with the bit eighteen inches in the sand at 2,040 feet. This test proves up a wide extent of wildcat territory. The Tee-Pee Company owns 8,000 acres around the well.

Some Real Wildcats

Some of the wildcat wells in Texas are being drilled at remote distances from railroad points and under the most trying circumstances. The Sinclair Gulf Oil Company has just abandoned a dry hole north of Throckmorton at a depth of 3,190 feet. The drilling outfit and fuel for this well was hauled from Albany, a distance of 47 miles, and the well cost \$90,000.

The McCauley Oil Association of Beaumont are drilling a well 23 miles southeast of Big Spring on the ranch of Ed Douthit, a prosperous cattleman. The ranch consists of 20 sections of 640 acres each.

What is probably one of the largest blocks of acreage on which a wildcat well is drilling is that of the States Oil Corporation well, eight miles from Midland. This company is drilling on 100,000 acres.

Fifteen wells are drilling and are preparing to drill in far off Fisher County. Ten of the wells are near Rotan. Each of the fifteen wells are on blocks of 10,000 acres each.

Three deep tests are going down near Spur in Dickens County. One of the wells, on the 24 Ranch, fifteen miles south of Spur, is now at a depth of 1,800 feet. This well has gone through three oil-bearing sands and is continuously smoking gas. It also went through 50 feet of solid rock salt at a depth of 200 feet.

A wildcat well that has cost a great deal of money is the one being drilled by the Quanah Texas Drilling Association in Hardeman County. The company was forced to haul materials



IRA BELL.

over very rough roads to their location at much expense. The Frizzell Company, in the same county, are drilling three wells on 15,000 acres.

The Garza Oil & Development Company, a local company of Post City, is drilling near Justiceburg, in Garza County. The well is down 1,800 feet and has a good showing of oil and gas.

Brewster County, on the Mexican border, spudded in a new well recently. The company drilling is the Twin City Oil Company and the well is on the R. L. Kokernot ranch near Harvey, a station on the Orient railway. Brewster County has 28 wells drilling and locations.

Ward, Loving and Andrews Counties, border counties along the New Mexico line, is showing activity in wildcat wells. The North Texas Petroleum Company is drilling on the Burt Hollowell's ranch in Andrews County. The Sunshine Oil Corporation is drilling on the M. Leeman tract, in Loving County. Two locations in Ward County are not far from Reeves County, which adjoins Ward on the west, and in which oil was struck recently in the Bell well.

The Devil's River Oil & Gas Company of Edinburg, in Southwest Texas, is hauling materials from San Angelo and Del Rio for a deep test on the ranch of Paul Turney, a Sutton County ranchman.

Benedum & Trees, independent wildcatters, brought in a big gasser in Edwards County, on the Sid Peterson ranch at 3,900 feet. The gas pressure is holding up but the hole has caved badly.

Thirty miles southeast from Sweetwater, the Sinclair Gulf Company are drilling on a block of 5,000 acres. The well is about 2,600 feet deep and had a good showing of gas. Nolan County must look good to the wildcatters; they are drilling wells and erecting derricks on many blocks of her acreage.

There is some oil excitement around the little town of May, Brown county. The outlook seems bright for a new wildcat pool in the territory contiguous to May.

The Cosden Oil & Gas Company have oil in a deep test near Jermyn, Jack County, and on the initial showing made by this well leases are doubling in price in Jack County.

Radiating from Fort Worth, far and wide, throughout Texas, the invincible, untamed wildcatters are punctuating the skyline with their derricks. East, North, South and West Texas, are turning over vast acreages for oil development to these modern knights whose lances are their steel drilling bits. That they will justify the faith and hope reposed in them is quite likely; that they will thrill us with even greater oil pool discoveries is the general belief. All honor to the honest wildcatters. Texas is betting on them and Texas already owes them an immense debt of gratitude.

in, he dodged back inter his hole, and I didn't see him any more for an hour. Then he poked his head out agin, and this time I kep as still as a mouse myself, and purty soon he crept back agin, a little by little he sided up to a Tule had all that was layin' clost to my face, about his rabbit eyes, and when he had eat as he ran off into s'nted, he slipped back agin to around in them. rom that time on, he come out back to the fact th fur his breakfast, dinner and Whiskey's pinto the at when he found I wouldn't the jack rabbit trail so tame he'd eat out'n my Just so! A rabbit aroun' the floor like a creek up out of the temp the comfort that little rolled down from his and I railey berlieve ef it his knees, beside it. mouse that I would have about jack rabbit trails d afore I got out'n that was cut through. The p. boys," continued Uncle out the trail with their pathway through, so they faces tickled by the grass along, Tule decided. Tule l, cross trail down the creek vi that again.

It was different. The gr. this trail, but matted down looked to right and left, start, was not a rabbit's runway, aft

AW! NO WONDER A CAN LICK ME YOU'RE TWICE BIGGER'N ME

SI Good-bye, ole winter Howdy, Miss Spr I'm yellin' to the An' plowin', Longin' fer th Longin' fer Longin' fer Whistlin'

Seth, "this thing of havin' nothin' to do, is the hardest work I've ever tackled yit, and I'd a heap ruther be out here in the woods foot loose, ef I had to run from bears and javalinas every day, than to live safe from all sorts of varmints in that jail at Matamoros."

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A movement is on at Marshall to induce every farmer to set out from ten to twenty pecan trees and give them careful cultivation during their early growth. Some very good profits have been made from pecan orchards in Harrison County this year. Harry McGee has 100 acres in pecans on his farm north of Marshall. His oldest trees are nine years and his youngest between five and six. This year

he gathered 2,000-pounds of very fine nuts and sold them at 50 cents per pound. Mr. T. L. Torrans, a hardware merchant at Jefferson, Marion County, has a 56-acre pecan orchard which is estimated to be worth more than \$50,000. He has sixteen hundred bearing trees in this orchard, and twenty-six different varieties of nuts. The trees varying in age from six to nine years. This year he gathered between five and six thousand pound of large, thin-shelled nuts.

The shipment of onions from Laredo will begin in the middle of April and continue for several weeks until the entire crop of Bermuda mudas have been shipped to the market. It is predicted that the crop will be around 2,000 carloads this season.

By PERCY L. CROSBY

